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OBSERVATIONS K

On the ADVANTAGES attending an ELEVATED and DRY SITUATION.

I FIND it to have been the general Practice of our Anceſtors (if we except a few old Caſtles, and thoſe moſtly on the Banks of Rivers) to fix their Country-houſes in Vallies; of the two Reaſons commonly aſſigned for it, one is, that of avoiding bleak Winds; the other is, plentifully to avail themſelves of the Benefit of Water: As to the Firſt, I am by no Means clear that the collected Direction Guſts of Wind acquire, in their Courſe along Bottoms, is not more violent and dangerous, than its more equal, though conſtant Effects on an Eminence; but I am at all Events ſure, that the Advantages in Point of Health and Proſpect, are greatly in Favour of the higher Land. In Anſwer to the Second, I ſay that, however neceſſary Water may be, thoſe who are ſituated in Vales, are not only ſubject to the Inconvenience of its occaſional Encroachments, and of conſtant

Damps; but have likewiſe that of its being, for the moſt Part, turbid.

It is urged, that thoſe who build on Hills, have, after being at a great Expence in ſinking Wells, ſtill the conſtant Tax of daily Labour remaining, to raiſe Water from an immenſe Depth, which when done, is generally ſubject to be what is called *hard* and unfit for many houſhold Uſes.

It is amazing that not one of our Engliſh Travellers (at leaſt that I know of) ſhould have yet, among their many Luxuries, adopted the ingenious Contrivance of the Venetians, whoſe Houſes, though built upon Piles, in the midſt of the Sea (which literally waſhes them) are better ſupplied with freſh Water, and of a better Quality, than thoſe of almoſt any Town I have elſe met with; nor will it, I believe be wondered at, when I have ſet down their ſenſible Method of ſecuring it.

Beſides public Wells, of which there are many in that City, each Houſe, if not very uncommonly poor, has one *at leaſt*, in either its Court-yard, or its *Landing-room*; the Figure of that Part of it, which is under-ground, is ſimilar to an Egg, with it ſmall End downwards,

wards, which not only facilitates the cleaning it when neceſſary, but enables them to draw even the laſt Gallon of Water; the Stones it is built with, are cemented together with Terras Mortar, to prevent the Percolation of the Sea-water, and if porous, plaiſtered with it; its Capacity is proportioned to the Size and Occaſions of the Family; the Top is cloſed with an Arch, ſtill obſerving the *Egg Form*, but as its broad End, all to a circular Opening of about three Feet Diameter, which is *capped* with an ornamented Stone, about three Feet high, hollowed within, for the Convenience of drawing Water, ſerving likewiſe to *key* the Arch, and as it is well fitted on, with the ſame Mortar, Nothing can drop or be ſwept in; thoſe who are over nice, cover the Top, in order to exclude even the *pure* Rain or Snow; in any Country but Venice a Covering might be *really* neceſſary to keep out *Leaves*; ſince the Communication of any Vegetable would ſoon animate, and when thoſe Animals died, corrupt the Water.

Thus far it may be ſaid in every Thing but its Form, to reſemble a common Rain-ciſtern, which indeed it would not much ſurpaſs did it

not differ in the Manner of ſupplying it, which, as it at once purifies the Water and prevents its corrupting (unleſs by the above accidental Means) conſtitutes its whole Merit; between the Well then, I have deſcribed, and a ſmall underground Ciſtern, that *firſt* receives the Water, as it comes in Pipes from the Houſe-tops, is a covered Drain or Channel, the longer the better, filled with different looſe Beds, *one before the other*, of Sand, Gravel, Chalk, and ſuch other Foſſils, as ſhall filter, cleanſe, and impregnate the Water paſſing through it, in a Manner nearly analogous to natural ſoft Springs (from which the Hint was probably taken) ſo that each Family may have Water at Command, of the preciſe Kind they beſt like, by examining the Soil leading to any Spring that pleaſes their Taſte, and if they chuſe it, even tranſporting, to that End, ſome of the very Earth it runs through; they might even have Calibeats, or any other Waters they wiſhed for in ſeparate Wells, though ſupplied by the ſame Rain Pipes.

Now that I am on the Subject of high Situations, I cannot omit deſcribing a Species of ſubterraneous Granery, which I have often won-

wondered ſhould be peculiar to the Town of Piſa in Tuſcany, where *only* I have obſerved them; (altho' they were certainly in Uſe on the African Continent as long back as Cæſar's Time, and are clearly deſcribed by that great and accurate Obſerver;) they might, I think, be uſed with ſtill greater Convenience upon Eminences, and the more ſo in this Country, for after the ordinary Method we build them in, beſides the Room they occupy, they have rather an uncouth Appearance near an elegantly diſpoſed Villa, whereas upon the Piſan Plan, they may be on the Plot before the Houſe, without being even perceived, not to mention their obvious Advantages in garriſoned Towns.

They are built with common Brick, in the exact Form, as far as is Under-ground, of the Venetian Wells, the only Differences being in the Top, which is carried up only within ſix Inches of the Surface of the Earth, a round Hoop of Stone, about twenty Inches in Diameter, *keys the Arch*; to this a Cover is exactly fitted, with a Ring to draw it up by, and if neceſſary, a Bar and Padlock, then the Earth and Turf laid over it as if Nothing was there;

when it is to be *ſtored*, the Turf is cut up as thick as can be, to prevent its fading, the Stone ſwept and removed, and a Man let down, who beginning at the Bottom, coils a thick Rope of Hay, Straw, or Ruſhes, *Bee-hive Faſhion*, to the Top, which Lining effectually keeps out the Damps, as may eaſily be conceived, ſince the Magazines at Piſa are cloſe to the River Arno, and below its Bed: I cannot however affirm that they are not built with Terras Mortar (which if ſo, would even here be no great Expence) though I believe they are not: it need ſcarcely be added, that by the ſame Aperture, a Man let down with a Buſhel, ſends up what Quantity of Corn is wanted, the Whole being ſhot in looſe: There are in the above City, I ſuppoſe, Forty of them, in about Half an Acre of Ground, each in general Twelve or Fourteen Feet Diameter in the wideſt Part, the uſual Proportion of the Egg, will mark its Height.

Another Convenience attending a high Situation, is what mere Accident once pointed out to me; *beneath* the *Cellar* of a * Houſe I hap-

* The Houſe *was* that of the famous Salvator Roſa at Rome, and is ſtill ſo of his Deſcendants.

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pened to inhabit, a ſubterraneous Vault was diſcovered, and as it was of antient Structure, and both elegant and ſubſtantial, a little Pair of winding Stairs being adapted to it, it became an under Story to the Cellar; the firſt was cold as ordinary Cellars are, but the ſecond was many Degrees more ſo than any Ice-houſe I ever ſaw; and I was from that Moment convinced, that an *Under-Cellar*, would, for the cooling of Wines, for making Ices, (which when prepared ſhould be carried down to it,) and for keeping Ice the Summer through, be a moſt commodious and cheap Addition to any Houſe, where the Springs did not riſe too high to prevent its taking place; it has the Advantage of needing no double Doors, nor any of thoſe troubleſome Precautions neceſſary in common Ice-houſes; it beſides ſerves many Purpoſes, it is at Home, and is *not in Sight*.

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CONSIDERATIONS
On the DESTRUCTIVE APPLICATION of GOLD.

BY what we can collect from the Teſtimony of antient Authors, there is the ſtrongeſt Reaſon to believe that Gold was at leaſt as plenty in thoſe early Times, as it appears to be in our own Days; were the ſame aſſerted of Lead, Copper, Iron, or any other Metals, ſo many Ways liable to waſte, it would be leſs ſurprizing; but that One, neither ſubject to the deſtructive Effects of Ruſt, nor diminiſhable by even repeated Fuſion, and whoſe univerſally acknowledged Value, might be alone ſuppoſed to preſerve it, ſhould not in ſo many Centuries have accumulated in Proportion to the Quantity annually found in different Parts of the World, is, I think, a Matter well worth inquiring into.

The antient Practice (though it at firſt Sight ſeems to announce Extravagance) of plating, and even forming, entirely of Gold, whatever they intended ſhould appear ſuch,

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proves on a nearer View, as much their Wiſdom, and Economy, as it ſhews real Grandeur, ſuch as cannot be commodiouſly *aped* by every Pretender to it; and I am perſuaded that it is ſolely to the modern Cuſtom of beating it to its utmoſt Degree of Dilatation, in order to the gilding Wood, Paper, Stucco, and other periſhable Materials (from which ſcarcely any One, I believe, when worn out, ever thought of extracting it) that we muſt attribute its preſent relative Scarcity.

It would be a curious Inquiry, how much of this precious Metal is (in England, France, Italy, and other Countries equally fond of outward Show,) annually *thus* hammered to its Deſtruction. I ſuſpect that it would even in this Kingdom amount to a Quantity, worthy the Interpoſition of the Legiſlature, and the more ſo, as it muſt, neceſſarily (as the Exiſtence of Luxury) renew the antient ſubſtantial Method of applying it, which would be no other than laying up Treaſures, that might in Times of real Need, be reckoned on as Bullion; its Ductility alſo is ſuch, as ſeems to beſpeak the uſing of it in Plates, ſince it is the only valuable Metal, capable of receiving, even

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when of a conſiderable Thickneſs, the moſt elegant, and finiſhed Moulding.

This naturally calls up, (though I believe it has already been judiciouſly cenſured by a moſt eminent Philoſopher and Hiſtorian) that very impolitic Tax upon Plate: How much more beneficial had it been, if inſtead of annexing a Penalty to the Uſe of it in groſs, we could (like our Neighbours of France, and Italy, whoſe Populace are in other Reſpects incomparably poorer) encourage our Peaſants to the procuring each, at leaſt, a few Forks and Spoons; as ſuch a Proviſion would be in Times of private Want, a ſure Reſource; ſo in thoſe of public Calamity, what a Fund might not be ſuddenly raiſed from it, with ſuch Security of advantageous Reſtitution, as would make it to be given up, even with Pleaſure. The Time may come, when it would be a Happineſs for this Nation, if the Scores of Millions that a little Paper is now anſwerable for, could be one hundredth Part ſo much depended on.

Silver is ſo plenty at Paris, that I can affirm the never having dealt at an Eating-houſe, though in different Quarters of the City, who could not, if required, ſerve me in Plate; the

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ſame may with Truth be ſaid of the Coffee-houſes, even in the Provinces. In Italy, the better Sort of Peaſants, (beſides Forks and Spoons, which are common to all) have large Bodkins, of an Qunce or two Weight, on which the Women's braided Hair is rolled, as in the antient Buſts, and often large Gold Chains, of two Yards long, going round the Neck and Waiſt.

In this Country, I fear the Wedding Ring (which I am told is often applied to by the Poor, and redeemed on the Saturday) is the only, Dependence in caſe of Sickneſs, continued Froſts, and other occaſional Cauſes of Diſtreſs; and yet, how much more eaſy would it be to the Peaſants of England, had but Cuſtom given a Sanction to the Practice, for every Couple to purchaſe *on their Marriage*, a few plain, maſſive, uſeful *Convertibles*, which Habit would ſoon render equally ſacred with the Ring, and a Depoſit, never to be applied to, but in Times of real Neceſſity, and with a ſteady View to the replacing it. Uſe would ſoon annex ſuch a Degree of Shame, to a wanton Diſpoſal of this little Treaſure, that the Week's Earnings, which are now too often

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ſpent in Drunkenneſs and Riot, would (as at firſt for its Purchaſe) be then laid up to redeem it, when a prudent Pledge of it, might poſſibly have ſaved an induſtrious poor Family from Deſpair and Ruin.